

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3378

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

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FROM AMBASSADOR NORLAND

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, BC, LT

SUBJ: AID PRIORITIES FOR BLS STATES

1. THIS IS WRITTEN AT THE OUTSET OF THE COM CONFERENCE DURING WHICH IT IS HOPED THAT SITUATION REGARDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL BE CLARIFIED. AS OF MAY 4 (WHEN I LEFT MBABANE AND TALKS WITH OSARAC) OR EVEN MAY 6 (WHEN I LEFT GABORONE), THE PROSPECTS WERE, TO SAY THE LEAST, OBSCURE. NO ONE PRETENDED TO KNOW WHERE WE STOOD EITHER IN TERMS OF AMOUNTS OR PROCEDURES. TALKS HERE, E.G. WITH BOB DUNCAN, HAVE HELPED CLARIFY THE PICTURE. BASED ON HIS AND OTHER BRIEFINGS, I GATHER THERE IS SOUND BASIS FOR BELIEVING THAT CONGRESS WILL AGREE TO MAKE AVAILABLE SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE BLS COUNTRIES IN FY'78. HOWEVER I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE EXACT AMOUNT OF AID AND NATURE OF PROJECTS MAY STILL BE IN THE BALANCE AND THAT AN EXPRESSION OF MY VIEWS MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN THE RAPIDLY EVOLVING SITUATION. HENCE THIS MESSAGE.

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2. IN FACT, WHAT WE ARE ABLE TO DO IN FY'78 WILL DEPEND IN NO SMALL MEASURE ON HOW WE PERFORM IN THE REMAINDER OF FY'77. THE GOVERNMENTS OF LESOTHO AND BOTSWANA, IN PARTICULAR, WERE ENCOURAGED BY INDICATIONS THAT WE INTENDED TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS. IN THE CASE OF BOTSWANA,

THOSE REQUIREMENTS RELATE (A) TO WHAT ONE MIGHT CALL THE EMERGENCY PROGRAMS REQUIRING THE DIVERSION OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS TO DEFENSE AS OUTLINED IN THE FARAH REPORT AND (B) TO REFUGEE NEEDS WHICH EXIST NOW AND ARE EXPECTED TO BE DETAILED IN A SUBSEQUENT FARAH REPORT. IN THE CASE OF LESOTHO, EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN AROUSED PRINCIPALLY BY THE STUDY AND RESULTING PROJECT PROPOSAL THAT THE US TAKE OVER CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUTHING-QACHAS NEK ROAD, THE PRIORITY PROJECT IN THE GOL'S VIEW. I MENTION THESE PROJECTS BECAUSE THEY INVOLVE CRITICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRECEDENTS THAT WILL DETERMINE WHAT WE DO IN FY '78.

3. THEY ARE CRITICAL FOR FY'78 BECAUSE OUR CREDIBILITY IS AT STAKE: IF WE DO NOT DECIDE TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THESE PROJECTS (DECISIONS WHICH WILL COME IN FY'77) THEN WE WILL HAVE, IN EFFECT, DISQUALIFIED OURSELVES FOR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION FOR FY'78 AND THE GOB AND THE GOL WILL LOOK IN FIRST INSTANCE TO OTHER POTENTIAL DONORS. TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE BOTSWANA FARAH MISSION AND LESOTHO ROAD PROJECTS WILL REQUIRE OUR MAKING COMMITMENTS WITHOUT (RPT WITHOUT) HAVING THE DEGREE OF AID DOCUMENTATION DESCRIBED IN RECENT MESSAGES. IN FACT, ONE CANNOT ADEQUATELY HIGHLIGHT THE POINT THAT THE FY'77 PROGRAM, AND THE FY'78 PROGRAMS FOR BOTSWANA AND LESOTHO, ARE BASICALLY POLITICAL AND CANNOT (AND WILL NEVER) MEET AID'S ECONOMIC CRITERIA, REGARDLESS OF THE WEIGHT OF THE PAPER IN SUPPORT OF THEM: BOTSWANA NEEDS AID TO MEET A POLITICAL/ LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SECURITY THREAT WITH INTERNAL REPERCUSSIONS (REFUGEES, ETC) LESOTHO'S BEST ARGUMENT FOR THE ROAD IS THAT PEOPLE CAN BY-PASS THE TRANSKEI -- ALTHOUGH IT ALSO MAKES POSSIBLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THAT AREA.

4. IF THE USG IS FORTHCOMING ON FY'77 AS OUTLINED ABOVE, THE FY'78 PRIORITIES WOULD, FOR ANY ASSISTANCE THAT WOULD BECOME AVAILABLE, BE AS FOLLOWS:

BOTSWANA: FARAH MISSION PROJECTS NOT FINANCED OR EARMARKED FOR OTHER DONORS (OF WHICH THERE ARE MANY). ONE PROJECT FALLING IN THIS CATEGORY IS THE RAILROAD. THE GOB SHOWS NO SIGNS OF CUTTING OFF ITS DRIVE TO PROVIDE FOR SOME KIND OF REPLACEMENT FOR ITS RAIL LIFE-LINE. DESPITE MANY RESERVATIONS (WHICH I SHARE), THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT THE GOB TO ABANDON THIS PROJECT. ON THE CONTRARY, IT MAY TAKE THE FORM OF A RAIL LINK FROM CENTRAL BOTSWANA TO THE ATLANTIC WHICH WOULD BE MORE COSTLY BUT ALSO MORE LOGICAL. IN ADDITION THERE WILL BE OTHER UNFORE-

SEEN REFUGEE-RELATED PROJECTS (SCHOOLS, CAMPS, ETC) FLOWING
FROM ANTICIPATED INCREASE OF REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA.

LESOTHO: THE QUTHING-QACHA'S NEK ROAD IS AN UNPARALLELED
OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT A PRIORITY PROJECT THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE
TO LESOTHO'S INDEPENDENCE, INTEGRITY AND VIABILITY. OTHER
PROJECTS INCLUDE SUPPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY IN ITS ATTEMPTS
LOCALLY TO IMPROVE ITS MANPOWER TRAINING. THE DIVISION OF
EXTRAMURAL STUDIES PROJECT COULD ABSORB SEVERAL MILLION
DOLLARS IF AVAILABLE.

IN CONCLUSION, I HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO STRESS THE
EMERGENCY NATURE OF THIS AID REQUIREMENTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES,
REQUIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN (OR ARE BEING) DOCUMENTED IN UN
(FARAH MISSION) REPORTS. FINALLY, DO NOT HESITATE TO LET US
KNOW IF WE CAN MAKE MORE SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
CURRENT EXERCISE.
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